

18th Military Police Brigade

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18th MPs join French to honor fallen for Memorial Day

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MANNHEIM, Germany— All across the world, hearts and minds were joined in remembrance this Memorial Day weekend. Whether through personal mourning for individual servicemembers, or in mass gatherings at the many ceremonies happening around the globe, millions of people paused to honor the sacrifices made in the name of liberty and freedom.

The 18th Military Police Brigade had the privilege of sending an honor platoon, a rifle squad and a color guard to support the French citizens of St. Avoird and Villers-Stoncourt, France as they honored the soldiers who gave their lives to defend the French during World War II.

High atop the hillsides of the Villers-Stoncourt countryside, the Soldiers of the 529th MP Company joined with French and Polish citizens May 29 to honor to the troops from both nations who paid the ultimate price in defending the people of the Lorraine region.

At the peak of Mont-du-St.Pierre stands a monument to those men. A large, dark cross looms over the landscape below, reminding those below that the freedom they enjoy has come at a price.

“This memorial symbol of sacrifice for the combatants committed to the liberation of our land in 1944 reminds us that we have a duty to remember,” said Mrs. Jacqueline Magard, Lord Mayor of Villers-Stoncourt.

For 45 consecutive years, since the monument was erected in 1976, the people of Villers-Stoncourt have honored these men. Their gratitude for the sacrifices made by those men has been passed on through the generations.

With the attendance and participation of many children at the Villers-Stoncourt ceremony, it was obvious that these men would not soon be forgotten and the tradition of remembrance would carry on.

Not far from Villers-Stoncourt is the Lorraine American Cemetery where the 529th MPs joined an even larger crowd May 30 to pay tribute to the thousands of Americans buried there.

Maj. Gen. Terry Wolff, the deputy commanding general of U.S. Army-Europe, spoke at the ceremony, which also had the honor of being attended by four American next-of-kin families and WWII veteran Jack Moran.

During the invocation, Maj. (CH) Brian Reck, the chaplain for the 18th MP Brigade, expressed the “heartfelt and eternal gratitude” felt by those in attendance for the men who, “fought for their liberties, their wives, their children, their loved ones and their country,” and paid the ultimate price.

Every speech at the ceremony expressed a sincere appreciation for those buried in the plots before them and as wreaths were laid in their honor, the reverence from a grateful nation was visibly apparent.

But as a lone bugler stood among the hundreds of rows of stark white gravestones and the heartbreaking notes of “Taps” cut through the air, the magnitude of the loss of life—and the gain of freedom—was truly felt.



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U.S. Soldiers from the 529th Military Police Company, 95th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, join with French citizens of Villers-Stoncourt, France, during a Memorial Day ceremony May 29, 2011 to honor the American and Polish troops who gave their lives to defend the Lorraine region during World War II. The memorial sits atop Mont-du-St. Pierre and the citizens of Villers-Stoncourt have paid tribute to the Soldiers memorialized there every year since the monument was erected, 45 years ago.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adrienne Burns, 18th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs)



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In a gesture of gratitude, a Villers-Stoncourt resident bows his head to the Soldiers of the 529th Military Police Company, 95th MP Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, following a Memorial Day ceremony May 29, 2011 atop Mont-du-St. Pierre, near Villers-Stoncourt, France, to pay homage to the American and Polish soldiers who gave their lives defending the Lorraine region of France during WWII.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adrienne Burns, 18th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs)



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U.S. Army Maj. (CH) Brian Reck, chaplain for the 18th Military Police Brigade, salutes after laying a wreath May 30, 2011 for the Soldiers buried at Lorraine American Cemetery in St. Avold, France. Reck gave the invocation for the Memorial Day ceremony there, which was one of many ceremonies held across Europe to honor the fallen this Memorial Day.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adrienne Burns, 18th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs)



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A lone bugler plays “Taps” during a Memorial Day ceremony May 30, 2011 at Lorraine American Cemetery in St. Avold, France. U.S. troops supported dozens of ceremonies across Europe during the Memorial Day weekend to honor those who paid the ultimate price for their country.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Adrienne Burns, 18th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs)